

THE MAGIC BALLOON



It was a cold Sunday morning.

Seven-year-old Bharat was very excited. Amma had bought him a bright blue balloon from the balloon seller in the park.

"I will take this balloon to school on Monday!" He told Amma excitedly. "All my friends will be so happy to play with me!"

"All right, now let me zip up your jacket so that you don't catch cold!" Amma said, "It is a very cold day today."

Bharat held the balloon string tightly with both hands, as he allowed his mother to zip up his jacket. Yes, it was really cold today.

By the time Bharat and his mother had finished their visit to the park, the grocery store and the bank, it was still cold. It was also time to get into the car and go back home.

But what was this? Bharat's balloon had lost its shape! It looked floppy and loose.

"Amma!" wailed Bharat. "My balloon is changing!"

Amma did not take notice as she was talking on her cell phone. With the phone in one hand, she seated Bharat in the car with the other, fastened his seat belt and began to drive after setting the phone on speaker mode.

Bharat was so sad. His lovely balloon was changing! But at least it wasn't so cold inside the car, he realized. The heating had been turned on by Amma and he snuggled into his warm seat, still tightly clutching the balloon.

There was a lot of traffic and the ride was slow and long. Bharat was bored, as Amma still hadn't stopped talking on her cell phone. Why did grownups like to talk and talk and talk, he wondered?

As he looked out of the window, and peered at a lovely dog on the footpath, the blue balloon came in his way. Pushing it aside, he was just about to point it out to Amma, when he noticed something very strange: the balloon was back to its big size and original shape!

"Look, look, Amma! My balloon has changed back again!" He shouted.

Amma signaled him to be quiet, as she pointed to the phone.

Bharat was thrilled. He stroked his balloon and murmured: "Oh, you are a magic bal-loon!"

At last they got home, and Bharat danced into the house, still holding the balloon.

"Take off your shoes, Bharat!" Amma commanded, as she dropped the keys on the table beside the doorway.

Bharat bent down to undo his shoe laces, and oh! He let go of the balloon!

What do you think happened next?

The balloon gently bobbed up, up, up ... and stayed near the ceiling.

Bharat wailed loudly. "Come back! Come back! You are my magic balloon!"

But the balloon just kept bobbing at the top of the room, as it touched the roof.

Bharat was so disappointed. Now he could not show off the balloon to his friends in school tomorrow.

He went to bed crying that night. What a huge disappointment!

When he woke up the next morning, the first thing he did was to run to the living room and look at the ceiling.

Where was his balloon? It was not there anymore!

Puzzled, he looked down and what did he see? He found a shriveled blue balloon on the floor.

This was surely a magic balloon! First, it changed shape, then it went back to its original shape, then it flew by itself to the ceiling, and then it dropped back in a smaller size! Would anyone be able to understand such magic?

Bharat went to school with the tiny balloon and a huge smile: he was going to show off his Magic Balloon to all his friends today!